



Almeley Wootton Quaker News

March 2024

<https://almeleyquakers.org.uk>

<https://smquakers.org.uk>

PALES FELLOWSHIP DAY 2024

15th June 2024 11am – 4pm

Matt Rosen is a young American Quaker, currently studying for a DPhil in Philosophy at Oxford University, who is "travelling in the ministry". Some members of our AM, including Stella and Ian Sterry, have heard him speak and been very impressed. We have had recommendations from other sources, including Oxford Meeting, where he has had a particular impact on Young Friends.

He has offered to spend a day with us at the Pales. There was enthusiasm for this at both an Almeley Business Meeting and at the most recent Area Meeting, so Colin Brown, one of the AM Co Clerks, has booked both the Pales and Matthew for the 15th June as a special day for Southern Marches Friends, and he has also extended a warm invitation to other Friends in Wales.

When Colin suggested to Matt that some Friends might not feel attracted by something that seemed, on the face of it, a bit too "bible-focussed" for them, he responded as follows:

"Being in Oxford meeting and having visited many meetings across the country at this point, I am indeed aware of the breadth of British Quakerism, and very much understand why so many Friends have felt a need to step away from the Bible and Christian language since these are so tied up with forms of religion that have been traumatic. I am finding, among young Friends, that there is a desire to explore the ways of using Christian language and reading the Bible that belong to our Quaker tradition – the experience of Christ within, and present in our midst, that was so transformative and earth-shaking for early Friends. I feel that is a very different thing from the forms of Christianity that Friends have rejected.

Maybe it's helpful to say, too, that I really don't feel I am coming with any agenda, except to be among Friends, listen to God with you all, and try to respond as led. The morning Bible exploration may be a new way of reading the Scriptures for many Friends, and I'm hoping this might be a way we can read them as if for the first time together."



Yielding to the Spirit Together – more details of the day

Join us for a day of worship and exploration at the Pales Quaker Meeting House, on 15 June from 11am to 4pm. Matt Rosen, a young Friend who has been travelling in the ministry throughout Britain over the past year, will be visiting us to share his experiences, discuss how young Friends are rediscovering the message of early Friends, and lead us in an exploration of how we might yield to the Spirit in our lives and communities.

The morning will begin with a Bible study session in the manner of Friends: we will be reading Romans 12, trying to hear the text in the Spirit that gave it forth, and asking ourselves how it might (or might not) speak to our conditions. We will use the text to explore our own experiences of transformation, worship, and the love, joy, and difficulty of community. After this, we will have time to share in waiting worship together.

Matt Rosen is a convinced Friend and member of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting. He has been one of the organisers of the Oxford young adult Friends group, an elder in the area and yearly meetings, and travels in the ministry with a concern to encourage Friends in listening to our inward Teacher. Over the past year, he has visited nearly thirty meetings under a sense of divine leading, and has found joy and conviction among Friends in many places. He was the Henry J. Cadbury Scholar at Pendle Hill Quaker Study Center in 2023, where he studied conviction experience among early and contemporary Friends.

The Pales is the oldest Meeting House in Wales still in use, set in beautiful surroundings near Llandegley, a few miles East of Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5UH. It is now owned and managed by Addoldai Cymru, but they are keen for Quakers to continue to use it for events such as this. We hope you will join us.

Special request to Almeley Friends

Matt and his "driver", Mark Dibben, from Faringdon Meeting will be staying with Colin Brown on the Friday night (14th June), in order to reduce their journey to the Pales on the Saturday morning. They are keen to go to a Meeting for Worship on their way back to Oxford on Sunday morning and we know they would love to experience Almeley, with its history (and connection to the US). Please could someone can put the two them up on Saturday night (15th)?

If so, please let Maggie or Helen know by Monday April 22nd.

Yearly Meeting 2024

Yearly Meeting 2024 takes place at Friends House and online over a long weekend, from Friday 26–Tuesday 30 July. Children and Young People are an integral part of our Yearly Meeting, and include Children's Programme for 0–11s, Young People at Yearly Meeting for 11–15s (non-residential) and Junior Yearly Meeting for 15–18s accommodated nearby.

Preparation sessions and Special Interest meetings will be held online from Friday 5–Wednesday 10 July, 2024.

Whether you plan to attend in Friends House or online, it is essential to book your place at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

There is no charge to attend Yearly Meeting at Friends House or online but If you plan to attend Yearly Meeting sessions in person at Friends House, you will need to book your own accommodation and travel arrangements.

For those attending Friends House, to ensure that we cater appropriately for hot meals you will need to buy a meal ticket in advance of Yearly Meeting. Information on how to do this will be sent to you in advance.



The St. Thomas Way

In 2019, Hereford Cathedral began a year of celebrations to mark the 700th anniversary of St Thomas Cantilupe, one of its two patron saints. To this end a pilgrimage trail was launched, commemorating the strange tale of a man, hanged in Swansea in 1282. He, through the prayers of Lady de Briouze which were addressed to the deceased Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, (Why? is unknown) came back to life. Strangely the man and the De Briouzes set off on foot to give thanks at the bishop's shrine in Hereford. The story was one of those that persuaded the Vatican to make Cantilupe a saint. One feels it must have been the most awkward road trip of all time.

The trail moves through the heart of the medieval March of Wales, in many ways the wild west of medieval Britain. It is not one continuous path but a series of individual circular walks of between 2 and 8 miles, mainly based on the pilgrim churches on the route.

In the autumn before Covid we decided to have a short holiday exploring South Wales, better known for its industry – old and new - and chose a few of the churches listed. It became a quiet pilgrimage, for those places we visited were peaceful, beautiful and evocative.



One such was Ewenny Priory, founded in 1140 for 12 Benedictine monks. The walls are high, dark and massive so that it looks more like a castle and apparently was built to defend the place against northern Welsh incursions. The church, however, was indeed a place of life and holiness: Huge round Norman pillars and arches and a suspicion of wall paintings – reminding one that once it would have been a fairground of colour. J.W.Turner painted the monastic chancel, still complete, and it is moving in its simplicity.

St Cadoc's church at Llancarfen has amazing wall paintings recently uncovered and it looks as though more will be found. The story of St George is brilliantly depicted as are the Seven deadly Sins. A place in which we spent much time.



Nearby is the Church of St Illtyd at Llantwit Major. It is not featured in the St Thomas Way but we could not exclude it. In the 6th century the Welsh saint had a monastery there. Indeed, it is claimed to be the 'university of the saints of the early Celtic Church'. The Norman church is built on its site. It has emerging wall paintings and a remarkable Galilee chapel which was brilliantly renovated in 2013 to provide rooms for church use and to display fine Celtic crosses which inspire contemplation.



One could spend two weeks travelling up through Caerphilly, Newport, Usk, see the magnificent Jesse Tree at Abergavenny and the wonderful church-

es at Patrishow and Kilpeck in Herefordshire before reaching the small, but noble Cathedral at Hereford where the tomb of Thomas Cantilupe adorns the north transept.

I hope you will not think this is just TripAdvisor. We found, as one does so often in small, rural churches, a quiet calm and peace, and also a vibrancy so that, despite the small population in the villages, there seems to be a strong sense of community. And, since the trail runs through country that is well-trodden, it maybe that you might explore on foot or virtually, and find a measure of peace.

<https://thomasway.ac.uk/information/>

<https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/places-to-visit/ewenny-priory>

<http://stcadocslancarfan.co.uk/>

<https://www.llanilltud.org.uk/>

Janet Robinson

Candles

The days to come are standing right before us,
like a row of little lighted candles –
golden, warm and lively little candles.

The bygone days are left behind,
a dismal row of burned-out candles,
those that are nearest smoking still,
cold candles, melted and bent.

I don't want to see them, their sight saddens me,
And it saddens me to see their former glow,
I look ahead at my still lighted candles.

I don't want to turn around, lest I see and shudder
how fast the darksome line grows longer,
how fast the burned-out candles multiply.

[C.P. Cavafy: Collected Poems. \(Lockert Library of Poetry in Translation\)](#)

by Constantine P. Cavafy

Looking Back, Looking Forward

The theme of our anniversary year was Looking Back, Looking Forward and the phrase has stayed with me.

A poem I find very emotional is called "Candles" and it is by C.P. Cavafy 1863 – 1933 who wrote in Greek, was from a Greek family but spent most of his life living in Alexandria.

Ten years ago we were visiting Athens when we came across an art exhibition featuring works by artists based on the poem. The differences and contrasts in interpretation were amazing and each was emotional in its own right.

I would be unable to translate the poem into a picture but I do try to understand the words, interpret them for myself and try to make sense of them.

From full light metaphorically, the poet moves to growing darkness "gold, warm and lively" to "cold, melted and bent". It seems the poem is about how quickly time passes, how soon the past is upon us. Looking back is hard. He will instead look forward to avoid seeing the increasing number of burned out candles.

My take on that is we may fail to see the light our candle of our present illumines; looking back, looking forward can both ignore our real present. The artists who interpreted the poem did not always paint uniform sized and shaped candles. The few remaining candles for those of us who have lived long lives may be brighter and larger than some gone before. During their lit state they may shine a brighter light. We can risk looking back at the stumps that remain and reflect how well they illumined those parts of our lives while they burned.

The poem has become a useful metaphor for me and I hope to continue to find positives in the candle analogies for both now and in the future.

Any thoughts yourself on the poem?

Stella R Sterry



Constantine P. Cavafy (1929)

(Konstantinos Petrou Kavafis)

Safari Njema - Travel well.

Start out with sturdy steps, my little one,
Your journey through the years has just begun.
Run cheerfully wherever childhood goes,
Discover the adventures it bestows.
Climb up the years to dizzy heights of youth,
Test and challenge - searching for the truth.
As you stride into manhood, tread with care,
For many a hidden hazard's waiting there.
One day you'll pause, stand still and looking back
See where it all began, way down the track,
And see the route you couldn't have foretold
The days, the ways, the memories they hold.
Tread lightly on the earth, seek good in everyone.
Enjoy your journey and go well, my little one.

Carey Glyn-Jones

Ideas please

Hello Friends, from my new house in Presteigne. As you can see my garden is a work in progress, not least because I have no need of an ex-fish pond! Before I bought the house they had an extension built and therefore had no use of the garage where it was ... i.e. under the decking! They used part of the remaining walls to make a 'feature' and built a fish pond which housed coy carp! Who'd have thought it, in Presteigne. You'll see that I am in the process of making some new paths and beds to get rid of the soggy lawn, and to the left of the wall I have placed sleepers to make a raised bed. So far, so good – but what to do with the carp pond? Lots of ideas are floating (excuse the pun) in my head but I'd appreciate your ideas. So suggestions on a postcard please ... as they say!



Maggie Taylor-Sanders

KAVANAGH, Jennifer: Do Quakers Pray?

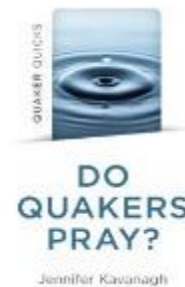
Christian Alternative Books 2023

£8.99

ISBN 978 1 80341 400 3

978 1 80341 401 0 eBook

This is one of a series of books entitled Quaker Quicks, all of which discuss various aspects of Quaker thought and practice. It is "Quick" in that it has only 64 pages but it is a cornucopia of thoughts on and attitudes towards prayer.



The question of the title might suggest that it is endeavouring to answer enquirers who are outside the Society of Friends but are members of other faiths whose practice of prayer is more clearly defined by tradition, form or specific practice. The author includes a description of a Meeting for Worship knowing that many are puzzled by the silence of a form of worship that does not include any obvious form or structure of prayer. However, the author discusses many 'types' of and attitudes towards prayer using her own conclusions and those of many other faiths, including some who would question the very idea of a "God". These illustrate clearly the many ways in which individuals can approach prayer, to construct a modus vivendi for life which has meaning both for them and for their place in the world.

Hence there are short chapters on Kinds or purposes of prayer, Spiritual practice, Contemplative prayer and Life as prayer and each one includes short and wise passages from other people. These chapters are not only informative about the prayer commitment of other faiths but greatly assist one's thinking about one's own.

In conclusion the author avers that Quakers do indeed pray in that it is an intrinsic part of both their inward and outward lives, deeply embedded in their personal lives and affecting how they live in the community.

[Hello! - Jennifer Kavanagh](#)

Janet Robinson



A big thank you to all those who attended the two working party days.

Many of the gutters and drains have been cleared, leaves collected and ivy removed from the walls as well as lots of weeding undertaken. Inside the window hinges in the Roger Prichard room have been oiled

Overall it was a very successful two days.

David Briggs

Ian has finally managed to erect his Christmas present! A weather station that feeds directly into the Met Office computers. It records wind speed and gusts, rain fall, temperature, pressure and light. Hopefully this should increase the chances of accurate forecasts in Little Burlton.

Stella R Sterry

